

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claim Status

Claims 1-17 were previously presented. Claims 1 and 17 are canceled, and claims 2, 5, 6, 11 and 14 are amended. Claims 2-16 are now pending.

Allowable Subject Matter

The indication of allowable subject matter is noted and appreciated. However, the Action is somewhat unclear in which claims are allowable.

First, the cover page of the Action indicates that claim 1 is rejected and claims 2-17 are objected to, while page 4 of the action indicates that claims 2-16 are allowable if rewritten in independent form. Since claim 17 is simply an apparatus formed by the method of claim 1, applicant assumes for purposes of response that the Action intended to reject claim 17 along with claim 1.

Second, page 2 of the Action purports to reject claims 1-6 and 17 under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by Tai et al. (US 6,612,535). With respect to claims 2-6, this rejection is in conflict with the indication on page 4 that claims 2-6 are allowable if rewritten in independent form. Since the rejection addresses only the limitations of claim 1, however, and not the limitations of claims 2-6, applicant assumes for purposes of response that the Action intended only to reject claims 1 and 17 as anticipated by Tai, and that claims 2-6 are allowable as set forth on page 4 of the Action.

Accordingly, claims 2, 5, 6, 11 and 14, which each depend directly from claim 1, are amended into independent form. Claims 3, 4, 7-10, 12, 13, 15 and 16 depend from these allowable claims. Thus, claims 2-16 are now in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections -35 USC 102(e)

As discussed above, applicant interprets the Action as rejecting claims 1 and 17 under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by Tai et al. (US 6,612,535). In response, claims 1 and 17 are canceled without prejudice. With regard to claim 17, applicant

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notes that it is canceled solely based on the assumption set forth above. Should this assumption be incorrect, applicant requests a further clarifying action and an opportunity to reinstate claim 17 if appropriate.

Conclusion

This application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned to resolve any issues that remain after entry of this amendment. Any fees due with this response may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
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